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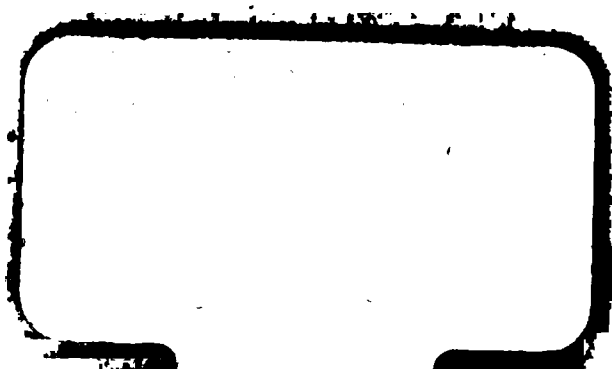
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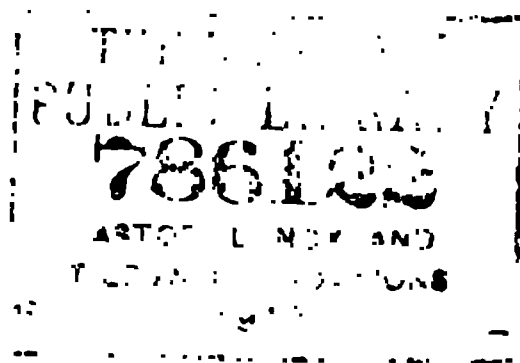
JOHN MASEFIELD

AT LOLLINGDON, CHOLSEY, BERKSHIRE

PRINTED AT LETCHWORTH BY THE GARDEN CITY PRESS LTD.

1916

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To
My Wife
JOHN WEN
JUN
1900

I.

LONG, long ago, when all the glittering
earth
Was heaven itself, when drunkards in the
street
Were like mazed kings shaking at giving
birth
To acts of war that sickle men like wheat ;
When the white clover opened Paradise
And God lived in a cottage up the brook,
Beauty, you lifted up my sleeping eyes
And filled my heart with longing with a look.
And all the day I searched but could not find
The beautiful dark-eyed who touched me
there.
Delight in her made trouble in my mind.
She was within all Nature, everywhere.
The breath I breathed, the brook, the flower,
the grass,
Were her, her word, her beauty, all she was.

II.

NIGHT came again, but now I could
not sleep ;

The owls were watching in the yew, the
mice

Gnawed at the wainscot. The mid dark was
deep.

The death-watch knocked the dead man's
summons thrice.

The cats upon the pointed housetops peered
About the chimneys, with lit eyes which saw
Things in the darkness, moving, which they
feared ;

The midnight filled the quiet house with
awe.

So, creeping down the stair, I drew the bolt
And passed into the darkness, and I knew
That Beauty was brought near by my revolt.
Beauty was in the moonlight, in the dew,
But more within myself, whose venturous
tread

Walked the dark house where death-ticks
called the dead.

III.

EVEN after all these years there comes
the dream

Of lovelier life than this in some new earth,
In the full summer of that unearthly gleam
Which lights the spirit when the brain gives
birth ;

Of a perfected I, in happy hours,
Treading above the sea that trembles there,
A path through thickets of immortal flowers
That only grow where sorrows never were ;
And, at a turn, of coming face to face
With Beauty's self, that Beauty I have sought
In women's hearts, in friends, in many a place,
In barren hours passed at grips with thought,
Beauty of woman, comrade, earth and sea,
Incarnate thought come face to face with me.

IV.

IF I could come again to that dear place
Where once I came, where Beauty lived
and moved,

Where, by the sea, I saw her face to face,
That soul alive by which the world has loved;
If, as I stood at gaze among the leaves,
She would appear again as once before,
While the red herdsman gathered up his
sheaves

And brimming waters trembled up the shore;
If, as I gazed, her Beauty that was dumb,
In that old time, before I learned to speak,
Would lean to me and revelation come,
Words to the lips and colour to the cheek,
Joy with its searing-iron would burn me
wise ;

I should know all, all powers, all mysteries.

V.

HERE in the self is all that man can
know

Of Beauty, all the wonder, all the power,
All the unearthly colour, all the glow,
Here in the self which withers like a flower;
Here in the self which fades as hours pass,
And droops and dies and rots and is forgotten
Sooner, by ages, than the mirroring glass
In which it sees its glory still unrotten.
Here in the flesh, within the flesh, behind,
Swift in the blood and throbbing on the
bone,

Beauty herself, the universal mind,
Eternal April wandering alone ;
The god, the holy ghost, the atoning lord,
Here in the flesh, the never yet explored.

VI.

FLESH, I have knocked at many a dusty
door,
Gone down full many a windy midnight
lane,
Probed in old walls and felt along the floor,
Pressed in blind hope the lighted window-
pane.
But useless all, though sometimes when the
moon
Was full in heaven and the sea was full,
Along my body's alleys came a tune
Played in the tavern by the Beautiful.
Then for an instant I have felt at point
To find and seize her, whosoe'er she be,
Whether some saint whose glory doth anoint
Those whom she loves, or but a part of me,
Or something that the things not understood
Make for their uses out of flesh and blood.

VII.

BUT all has passed, the tune has died
away,
The glamour gone, the glory ; is it chance ?
Is the unfeeling mud stabbed by a ray
Cast by an unseen splendour's great advance ?
Or does the glory gather crumb by crumb
Unseen, within, as coral islands rise,
Till suddenly the apparitions come
Above the surface, looking at the skies ?
Or does sweet Beauty dwell in lovely things
Scattering the holy hintings of her name
In women, in dear friends, in flowers, in
springs,
In the brook's voice, for us to catch the
same ?
Or is it we who are Beauty, we who ask ?
We by whose gleams the world fulfils its
task.

VIII.

THESE myriad days, these many thousand hours,
A man's long life, so choked with dusty things,
How little perfect poise with perfect powers,
Joy at the heart and Beauty at the springs.
One hour, or two, or three, in long years scattered,
Sparks from a smithy that have fired a thatch,
Are all that life has given and all that mattered;
The rest, all heaving at a moveless latch.
For these, so many years of useless toil,
Despair, endeavour, and again despair,
Sweat, that the base machine may have its oil,
Idle delight to tempt one everywhere.
A life upon the cross. To make amends,
Three flaming memories that the deathbed ends.

IX.

THERE, on the darkened deathbed, dies
the brain
That flared three several times in seventy
years.

It cannot lift the silly hand again,
Nor speak, nor sing, it neither sees nor hears;
And muffled mourners put it in the ground
And then go home, and in the earth it lies
Too dark for vision and too deep for sound,
The million cells that made a good man
wise.

Yet for a few short years an influence stirs,
A sense or wraith or essence of him dead,
Which makes insensate things its ministers
To those beloved, his spirit's daily bread;
Then that, too, fades; in book or deed a
spark
Lingers, then that, too, fades; then all is
dark.

X.

SO in the empty sky the stars appear,
Are bright in heaven marching through
the sky,
Spinning their planets, each one to his year,
Tossing their fiery hair until they die ;
Then in the tower afar the watcher sees
The sun, that burned, less noble than it was,
Less noble still, until by dim degrees
No spark of him is specklike in his glass.
Then blind and dark in heaven the sun
proceeds,
Vast, dead and hideous, knocking on his
moons,
Till crashing on his like creation breeds,
Striking such life, a constellation swoons ;
From dead things striking fire a new sun
springs,
New fire, new life, new planets with new
wings.

XI.

IT may be so with us, that in the dark,
When we have done with Time and
wander Space,
Some meeting of the blind may strike a
spark,
And to Death's empty mansion give a grace.
It may be, that the loosened soul may find
Some new delight of living without limbs,
Bodiless joy of flesh-untrammelled mind,
Peace like a sky where starlike spirit swims.
It may be, that the million cells of sense,
Loosed from their seventy years' adhesion,
pass
Each to some joy of changed experience,
Weight in the earth or glory in the grass.
It may be, that we cease ; we cannot tell.
Even if we cease, life is a miracle.

XII.

WHAT am I, Life? A thing of watery
salt

Held in cohesion by unresting cells

Which work they know not why, which
never halt,

Myself unwitting where their master dwells.

I do not bid them, yet they toil, they spin ;

A world which uses me as I use them,

Nor do I know which end or which begin,

Nor which to praise, which pamper, which
condemn.

So, like a marvel in a marvel set,

I answer to the vast, as wave by wave

The sea of air goes over, dry or wet,

Or the full moon comes swimming from
her cave,

Or the great sun comes north, this myriad I

Tingles, not knowing how, yet wondering
why.

XIII.

IF I could get within this changing I,
This ever altering thing which yet
persists,
Keeping the features it is reckoned by,
While each component atom breaks or
twists,
If, wandering past strange groups of shifting
forms,
Cells at their hidden marvels hard at work,
Pale from much toil, or red from sudden
storms,
I might attain to where the Rulers lurk.
If, pressing past the guards in those grey
gates,
The brain's most folded, intertwined shell,
I might attain to that which alters fates,
The King, the supreme self, the Master Cell;
Then, on Man's earthly peak, I might
behold
The unearthly self beyond, unguessed,
untold.

XIV.

WHAT is this atom which contains
the whole,
This miracle which needs adjuncts so strange,
This, which imagined God and is the soul,
The steady star persisting amid change?
What waste, that smallness of such power
should need
Such clumsy tools so easy to destroy,
Such wasteful servants difficult to feed,
Such indirect dark avenues to joy.
Why, if its business is not mainly earth,
Should it demand such heavy chains to
sense?
A heavenly thing demands a swifter birth,
A quicker hand to act intelligence;
An earthly thing were better like the rose,
At peace with clay from which its beauty
grows.

XV.

AH, we are neither heaven nor earth,
but men ;

Something that uses and despises both,
That takes its earth's contentment in the
pen,

Then sees the world's injustice and is wroth,
And flinging off youth's happy promise,
flies

Up to some breach, despising earthly things,
And, in contempt of hell and heaven, dies
Rather than bear some yoke of priests or
kings.

Our joys are not of heaven nor earth, but
man's,

A woman's beauty, or a child's delight,
The trembling blood when the discoverer
scans

The sought-for world, the guessed-at satel-
lite ;

The ringing scene, the stone at point to
blush

For unborn men to look at and say "Hush."

XVI.

R OSES are beauty, but I never see
Those blood drops from the burning
heart of June

Glowing like thought upon the living tree
Without a pity that they die so soon,
Die into petals, like those roses old,
Those women, who were summer in men's
hearts

Before the smile upon the Sphinx was cold
Or sand had hid the Syrian and his arts.
O myriad dust of beauty that lies thick
Under our feet that not a single grain
But stirred and moved in beauty and was
quick

For one brief moon and died nor lived
again ;

But when the moon rose lay upon the grass
Pasture to living beauty, life that was.

XVII.

OVER the church's door they moved a
stone,
And there, unguessed, forgotten, mortared
up,
Lay the priest's cell where he had lived
alone.
There was his ashy hearth, his drinking cup,
There was his window whence he saw the
host,
The God whose beauty quickened bread
and wine ;
The skeleton of a religion lost,
The ghostless bones of what had been
divine.
O many a time the dusty masons come
Knocking their trowels in the stony brain
To cells where perished priests had once a
home,
Or where devout brows pressed the window
pane,
Watching the thing made God, the God
whose bones
Bind underground our soul's foundation
stones.

XVIII.

OUT of the clouds come torrents, from
the earth

Fire and quakings, from the shrieking air
Tempests that harry half the planet's girth.
Death's unseen seeds are scattered every-
where.

Yet in his iron cage the mind of man
Measures and braves the terrors of all these.
The blindest fury and the subtlest plan
He turns, or tames, or shows in their degrees.
Yet in himself are forces of like power,
Untamed, unreckoned; seeds that brain to
brain

Pass across oceans bringing thought to flower,
New worlds, new selves, where he can live
again

Eternal beauty's everlasting rose
Which casts this world as shadow as it goes.

XIX.

O LITTLE self, within whose smallness
lies

All that man was, and is, and will become,
Atom unseen that comprehends the skies
And tells the tracks by which the planets
roam ;

That, without moving, knows the joys of
wings,

The tiger's strength, the eagle's secrecy,
And in the hovel can consort with kings,
Or clothe a God with his own mystery.

O with what darkness do we cloak thy light,
What dusty folly gather thee for food,
Thou who alone art knowledge and delight,
The heavenly bread, the beautiful, the good.
O living self, O God, O morning star,
Give us thy light, forgive us what we are.

XX.

I WENT into the fields, but you were
there

Waiting for me, so all the summer flowers
Were only glimpses of your starry powers ;
Beautiful and inspired dust they were.

I went down by the waters, and a bird
Sang with your voice in all the unknown tones
Of all that self of you I have not heard,
So that my being felt you to the bones.

I went into the house, and shut the door
To be alone, but you were there with me ;
{ All beauty in a little room may be,
Though the roof lean and muddy be the floor }

Then in my bed I bound my tired eyes
To make a darkness for my weary brain ;
But like a presence you were there again,
Being and real, beautiful and wise,

So that I could not sleep, and cried aloud,
“ You strange grave thing, what is it you
would say ? ”

The redness of your dear lips dimmed to grey,
The waters ebbed, the moon hid in a cloud.

XXI.

THIS is the living thing that cannot
stir.

Where the seed chances there it roots and
grows,

To suck what makes the lily or the fir
Out of the earth and from the air that blows,
Great power of Will that little thing the
seed

Has, all alone in earth, to plan the tree,
And, though the mud oppresses, to succeed
And put out branches where the birds may be.
Then the wind blows it, but the bending
boughs

Exult like billows, and their million green
Drink the all-living sunlight in carouse,
Like dainty harts where forest wells are clean,
While it, the central plant, which looks o'er
miles,

Draws milk from the earth's breast, and
sways, and smiles.

XXII.

HERE, where we stood together, we
three men,
Before the war had swept us to the East,
Three thousand miles away, I stand agen
And hear the bells, and breathe, and go to
feast.

We trod the same path, to the self-same
place,

Yet here I stand, having beheld their graves,
Skyros whose shadows the great seas crase,
And Sedd-el-Bahr that ever more blood
craves.

So, since we communed here, our bones
have been

Nearer, perhaps, than they again will be.
Earth and the world-wide battle lie between,
Death lies between, and friend-destroying
sea.

Yet here, a year ago, we talked and stood
As I stand now, with pulses beating blood.

XXIII.

I SAW her like a shadow on the sky
In the last light, a blur upon the sea;
Then the gale's darkness put the shadow by.
But from one grave that island talked to me;
And in the midnight, in the breaking storm,
I saw its blackness and a blinding light,
And thought "So death obscures your
gentle form,
So memory strives to make the darkness
bright;
And, in that heap of rocks, your body lies,
Part of the island till the planet ends,
My gentle comrade, beautiful and wise,
Part of this crag this bitter surge offends,
While I, who pass, a little obscure thing,
War with this force, and breathe, and am
its king."

XXIV.

LOOK at the grass, sucked by the seed
from dust,
Whose blood is the spring rain, whose food
the sun,
Whose life the scythe takes ere the sorrels
rust,
Whose stalk is chaff before the winter's done.
Even the grass its happy moment has
In May, when glistering buttercups make
gold ;
The exulting millions of the meadow-grass
Give out a green thanksgiving from the
mould.
Even the blade that has not even a blossom
Creates a mind, its joy's persistent soul
Is a warm spirit on the old earth's bosom
When April's fire has dwindled to a coal ;
The spirit of the 'grasses' joy makes fair
The winter fields when even the wind goes
bare.

XXV.

THERE is no God, as I was taught in
youth,

Though each, according to his stature, builds
Some covered shrine for what he thinks the
truth,

Which day by day his reddest heart-blood
gilds.

There is no God ; but death, the clasping sea,
In which we move like fish, deep over deep,
Made of men's souls that bodies have set free,
Floods to a Justice though it seems asleep.

There is no God ; but still, behind the veil,
The hurt thing works, out of its agony.

Still like the given cruse that did not fail
Return the pennies given to passers by.

There is no God ; but we, who breathe the
air,

Are God ourselves, and touch God every-
where.

XXVI.

WHEREVER beauty has been quick
in clay

Some effluence of it lives, a spirit dwells,
Beauty that death can never take away
Mixed with the air that shakes the flower
bells ;

So that by waters where the apples fall,
Or in lone glens, or valleys full of flowers,
Or in the streets where bloody tidings call,
The haunting waits the mood that makes it
ours.

Then at a turn, a word, an act, a thought,
Such difference comes ; the spirit apprehends
That place's glory ; for where beauty fought
Under the veil the glory never ends ;
But the still grass, the leaves, the trembling
flower

Keep, through dead time, that everlasting
hour.

XXVII.

BEAUTY, let be ; I cannot see your face,
I shall not know you now, nor touch
your feet,
Only within me tremble to your grace,
Tasting this crumb vouchsafed which is so
sweet.
Even when the full-leaved Summer bore no
fruit
You gave me this, this apple of man's tree ;
This planet sings when other spheres were
mute,
This light begins when darkness covered me.
Now, though I know that I shall never know
All, through my fault, nor blazon with my
pen
That path prepared where only I could go,
Still, I have this, not given to other men :
Beauty, this grace, this spring, this given
bread,
This life, this dawn, this wakening from the
dead.

XXVIII.

YOU are more beautiful than women are,
Wiser than men, stronger than ribbèd
death,
Juster than Time, more constant than the
star,
Dearer than love, more intimate than breath,
Having all art, all science, all control
Over the still unsmithied, even as Time
Cradles the generations of man's soul.
You are the light to guide, the way to climb.
So, having followed beauty, having bowed
To wisdom and to death, to law, to power,
I like a blind man stumble from the crowd
Into the darkness of a deeper hour,
Where in the lonely silence I may wait
The prayed-for gleam—your hand upon the
gate.

XXIX.

BEAUTY retires ; the blood out of the
earth

Shrinks, the stalk dries, lifeless November still
Drops the brown husk of April's greenest
birth.

Through the thinned beech clump I can
see the hill.

So withers man, and though his life renews
In Aprils of the soul, an autumn comes
Which gives an end, not respite, to the thews
That bore his soul through the world's
martyrdoms.

Then all the beauty will be out of mind,
Part of man's store, that lies outside his
brain,

Touch to the dead and vision to the blind,
Drink in the desert, bread, eternal grain,
Part of the untilled field that beauty sows
With flowers untold, where quickened spirit
goes.

XXX.

NOT for the anguish suffered is the
 slur,
Not for the woman's taunts, the mocks of
 men ;
No, but because you never welcomed her,
Her of whose beauty I am only the pen.

There was a dog, dog-minded, with dog's
 eyes,
Damned by a dog's brute-nature to be true.
Something within her made his spirit wise ;
He licked her hand, he knew her; not so you.

When all adulterate beauty has gone by,
When all inanimate matter has gone down,
We will arise and walk, that dog and I,
The only two who knew her in the town.

We'll range the pleasant mountain side by
 side,
Seeking the blood-stained flowers where
 Christs have died.

XXXI.

BEAUTY was with me once, but now,
grown old,
I cannot hear nor see her : thus a King
In the high turret kept him from the cold
Over the fire, with his magic ring,
Which, as he wrought, made pictures come
and go
Of men and times, past, present, and to be ;
Now like a smoke, now flame-like, now a
glow,
Now dead, now bright, but always fantasy,
While, on the stair without, a faithful slave
Stabbed to the death, crawled bleeding,
whispering, " Sir,
They come to kill you, fly : I come to save,
O you great gods, for pity let him hear."
Then, with his last strength tapped, and
muttered, " Sire."
While the King smiled and drowsed above
the fire.

XXXII.

SO beauty comes, so with a failing hand
She knocks, and cries, and fails to make
me hear,
She who tells futures in the falling sand,
And still, by signs, makes hidden meanings
clear ;
She, who behind this many peopled smoke,
Moves in the light and struggles to direct,
Through the deaf ear and by the baffled
stroke,
The wicked man, the honoured architect.
Yet at a dawn before the birds begin,
In dreams, as the horse stamps and the
hound stirs,
Sleep slips the bolt and beauty enters in
Crying aloud those hurried words of hers,
And I awake and, in the birded dawn,
Know her for Queen, and own myself a
pawn.

XXXIII.

YOU will remember me in days to come,
With love, or pride, or pity, or contempt,
So will my friends (not many friends, yet some),
When this my life will be a dream out-dreamt ;
And one, remembering friendship by the fire,
And one, remembering love time in the dark,
And one, remembering unfulfilled desire,
Will sigh, perhaps, yet be beside the mark ;
For this my body with its wandering ghost
Is nothing solely but an empty grange,
Dark in a night that owls inhabit most,
Yet when the King rides by there comes a change ;
The windows gleam, the cresset's fiery hair
Blasts the blown branch and beauty lodges there.

XXXIV.

IF Beauty be at all, if, beyond sense,
There be a wisdom piercing into brains,
Why should the glory wait on impotence,
Biding its time till blood is in the veins?

There is no beauty, but, when thought is
 quick,
Out of the noisy sickroom of ourselves
Some flattery comes to try to cheat the sick,
Some drowsy drug is groped for on the
 shelves.

There is no beauty, for we tread a scene
Red to the eye with blood of living things;
Thought is but joy from murder that has
 been,
Life is but brute at war upon its kings.

There is no beauty, nor could beauty care
For us, this dust, that men make every-
 where.

XXXV.

O WRETCHED man, that, for a little
mile,
Crawls beneath heaven for his brother's
blood,
Whose days the planets number with their
style,
To whom all earth is slave, all living, food;

O withering man, within whose folded shell,
Lies yet the seed, the spirit's quickening
corn,
That Time and Sun will change out of the
cell
Into green meadows, in the world unborn;

If Beauty be a dream, do but resolve
And fire shall come, that in the stubborn
clay

Works to make perfect till the rocks dissolve,
The barriers burst and beauty takes her way,

Beauty herself, within whose blossoming
Spring
Even wretched man shall clap his hands and
sing.

XXXVI.

NIGHT is on the downland, on the
lonely moorland,
On the hills where the wind goes over
sheep-bitten turf,
Where the bent grass beats upon the un-
ploughed poorland
And the pine woods roar like the surf.

Here the Roman lived on the wind-barren
lonely,
Dark now and haunted by the moorland
fowl ;
None comes here now but the peewit only,
And moth-like death in the owl.

Beauty was here, on this beetle-droning
downland ;
The thought of a Cæsar in the purple came
From his palace by the Tiber in the Roman
townland
To this wind-swept hill with no name.

Lonely Beauty came here and was here in
sadness,
Brave as a thought on the frontier of the
mind,

In the camp of the wild upon the march of
madness,
The bright-eyed Queen of the blind.

Now where Beauty was are the wind-
withered gorses
Moaning like old men in the hill-wind's
blast,
The flying sky is dark with running horses
And the night is full of the past.

XXXVII.

IF all be governed by the moving stars,
If passing planets bring events to be,
Searing the face of Time with bloody scars,
Drawing men's souls even as the moon the
 sea,

If as they pass they make a current pass
Across man's life and heap it to a tide,
We are but pawns, ignobler than the grass
Cropped by the beast and crunched and
 tossed aside.

Is all this beauty that doth inhabit heaven
Train of a planet's fire? Is all this lust
A chymic means by warring stars contriven
To bring the violets out of Cæsar's dust?
Better be grass, or in some hedge unknown
The spilling rose whose beauty is its own.

XXXVIII.

IN emptiest furthest heaven where no
stars are,
Perhaps some planet of our master sun
Still rolls an unguessed orbit round its star,
Unthought, unseen, unknown of anyone.
Roving dead space according to its law,
Casting our light on burnt-out suns and
blind,
Singing in the frozen void its word of awe,
One wandering thought in all that idiot
mind.
And, in some span of many a thousand year,
Passing through heaven its influence may
arouse
Beauty unguessed in those who habit here,
And men may rise with glory on their
brows
And feel new life like fire, and see the old
Fall from them dead, the bronze's broken
mould.

XXXIX.

PERHAPS in chasms of the wasted past,
That planet wandered within hail of
ours,
And plucked men's souls to loveliness and
cast
The old, that was, away, like husks of
flowers ;
And made them stand erect and bade them
build
Nobler than hovels plaited in the mire,
Gave them an altar and a God to gild,
Bridled the brooks for them and fettered fire;
And, in another coming, forged the steel
Which, on life's scarlet wax, for ever set
Longing for beauty bitten as a seal
That blood not clogs nor centuries forget,
That built Atlantis, and, in time, will raise
That grander thing whose image haunts our
days.

XL.

FOR, like an outcast from the city, I
Wander the desert strewn with travellers'
bones,

Having no comrade but the starry sky
Where the tuned planets ride their floating
thrones.

I pass old ruins where the kings caroused
In cups long shards from vines long since
decayed,

I tread the broken brick where queens were
housed

In beauty's time ere beauty was betrayed,
And in the ceaseless pitting of the sand
On monolith and pyle, I see the dawn
Making those skeletons of beauty grand
By fire that comes as darkness is withdrawn,
And, in that fire, the art of men to come
Shines with such glow I bless my martyrdom.

XLI.

DEATH lies in wait for you, you wild
thing in the wood,
Shy-footed beauty dear, half-seen, half-
understood,
Glimpsed in the beech-wood dim and in the
dropping fir,
Shy like a fawn and sweet and beauty's
minister.

Glimpsed as in flying clouds by night the
little moon,
A wonder, a delight, a paleness passing soon.

Only a moment held, only an hour seen,
Only an instant known in all that life has
been,
One instant in the sand to drink that gush
of grace,
The beauty of your way, the marvel of your
face.

Death lies in wait for you, but few short
hours he gives ;
I perish even as you by whom all spirit lives.
Come to me, spirit, come, and fill my hour
of breath
With hours of life in life that pay no toll to
death.

XLII.

THEY called that broken hedge The
Haunted Gate.

Strange fires (they said) burnt there at
moonless times.

Evil was there, men never went there late,
The darkness there was quick with threatened
crimes.

And then one digging in that bloodied clay
Found, but a foot below, a rotted chest.

Coins of the Romans, tray on rusted tray,
Hurriedly heaped there by a digger prest.

So that one knew how, centuries before,
Some Roman flying from the sack by night,
Digging in terror there to hide his store,

Sweating his pick, by windy lantern light,
Had stamped his anguish on that place's
soul,

So that it knew and could rehearse the
whole.

XLIII.

THERE was an evil in the nodding
wood
Above the quarry long since overgrown,
Something which stamped it as a place of
blood
Where tortured spirit cried from murdered
bone.
Then, after years, I saw a rusty knife
Stuck in a woman's skull, just as 'twas
found,
Blackt with a centuried crust of clotted life,
In the red clay of that unholy ground.
So that I knew the unhappy thing had
spoken,
That tongueless thing for whom the quarry
spoke,
The evil seals of murder had been broken
By the red earth, the grass, the rooted oak.
The inarticulate dead had forced the spade,
The hand, the mind, till murder was dis-
played.

XLIV.

GO, spend your penny, Beauty, when
you will,
In the grave's darkness let the stamp be lost.
The water still will bubble from the hill,
And April quick the meadows with her
ghost;
Over the grass the daffodils will shiver,
The primroses with their pale beauty
abound,
The blackbird be a lover and make quiver
With his glad singing the great soul of the
ground;
So that if the body rot, it will not matter;
Up in the earth the great game will go on,
The coming of spring and the running of
the water,
And the young things glad of the womb's
darkness gone.
And the joy we felt will be a part of the
glory
In the lover's kiss that makes the old
couple's story.

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XLV.

THOUGH in life's streets the tempting
shops have lured
Because all beauty, howsoever base,
Is vision of you, marred, I have endured,
Tempted or fall'n, to look upon your face.
Now through the grinning death's-head in
the paint,
Within the tavern-song, hid in the wine,
In many-kindred man, emperor and saint,
I see you pass, you breath of the divine.
I see you pass, as centuries ago
The long dead men with passionate spirit
saw.
O brother man, whom spirit habits so,
Through your red sorrows Beauty keeps
her law,
Beauty herself, who takes your dying hand,
To leave through Time the Memnon in the
sand.

XLVI.

WHEN all these million cells that are
my slaves

Fall from my pourried ribs and leave me
lone,

A living speck among a world of graves,

What shall I be, that spot in the unknown?

A glow-worm in a night that floats the sun?

Or deathless dust feeling the passer's foot?

An eye undying mourning things undone?

Or seed for quickening free from prisoning
fruit?

Or an eternal jewel on your robe,

Caught to your heart, one with the April
fire

That made me yours as man upon the globe,

One with the spring, a breath in all desire,

One with the primrose, present in all joy?

Or pash that rots, which pismires¹⁷¹³²⁴ can
destroy?

XLVII.

LET that which is to come be as it may,
Darkness, extinction, justice, life intense,
The flies are happy in the summer day,
Flies will be happy many summers hence.
Time with his antique breeds that built the
Sphinx,
Time with her men to come whose wings
will tower,
Poured and will pour, not as the wise man
thinks,
But with blind force, to each his little hour.
And when the hour has struck, comes death
or change,
Which, whether good or ill we cannot tell,
But the blind planet will wander through
her range
Bearing men like us who will serve as well.
The sun will rise, the winds that ever move
Will blow our dust that once were men in
love.

